

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

TELEPHONE ANSWERING SYSTEM WITH COURTESY GREETING SELECTABLE AFTER CALL IS RECEIVED

5 A telephone answering system allows a recipient to
spontaneously select a desired greeting after the phone
has begun ringing to inform the caller that the call
cannot be taken at this time and further providing an
indication to either hold the line or when to expect a
return call. A dedicated button is provided on the
10 phone which, when pushed, selects a different greeting
depending on the number of times the button is pushed.
For example, if the recipient is interested in taking
the call, but cannot at that particular instant,
pressing the dedicated button one time will select a
15 greeting like "Hold on a moment, I'll be right with
you". For n presses, the selected greeting might be
"I'm sorry, I can't pick up the phone right now, but
please leave your number and I'll call back in $((n-1) \times$
20 $10)$ minutes." Knowing when they can expect a call back
will increase the likelihood that the caller will make
themselves available at the call back time and
discourage phone tag.